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ABSTRACT

Parents and guardians of children in the Indianapolis Public Schools' Montessori Option Program for kindergartners through sixth graders were surveyed. Parents and guardians were surveyed on: (1) the pupil progress report, which was used on a pilot basis during the 1988-89 school year; (2) the Montessori method; (3) strengths and weaknesses of the program; and (4) changes the program needed. Questionnaires were sent to the households of 536 pupils and to 50 school staff members in the 3 Montessori Option elementary schools. Parents and guardians replied positively to 25 closed-ended questions; were neutral about none; and responded negatively to four. School staff replied positively to 27; were neutral about none; and responded negatively to two. Parents and guardians expressed concern about more than 46 survey-related topics. Parent-initiated topics included: competitiveness and comparison between students, curriculum design and development, learning environments, parent-teacher conferences, program expansion, public school use of Montessori philosophy, and staff certification and training. School staff expressed concern about classroom mangagement, instructional materials, parent involvement, parent-teacher conferences, skills and knowledge analysis, student progress, and the district-wide testing program. Questions and responses (along a Likert-type scale) are provided for parents and school staff members. (RH)

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Indianapolis Public Schools

EVALUATION OF THE INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS' MONTESSORI OPTION (K-6) PUPIL PROGRESS REPORT

Volume I: Executive Summary

by

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May 1989

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EVALUATION OF THE INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS' MONTESSORI OPTION (K-6) PUPIL PROGRESS REPORT

VOLUME 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN

In November, 1988, Dr. James A. Adams, IPS Superintendent, asked the IPS Research, Evaluation and Testing Department to survey the IPS Montessori Option Program participants. He desired Program participant feedback concerning reactions and comments about the Montessori Option pilot Pupil Progress Report being used during this 1988-89 school year. Additionally, responses were obtained of survey takers' perceptions about the Montessori method basic to the Montessori Option curriculum and to open-ended questions about Program suggested strengths, weaknesses and changes.

METHODOLOGY

A survey was given to Montessori Option Program participants who had input to the pilot Pupil Progress Report used during the 1988-89 school year. Pre survey interviews and input allowed the development of a survey meeting the information requirements of the Option participants. The survey was developed by a panel of judges, offered to public review and accepted in final form by Dr. Adams. Households of 536 pupils were surveyed with one survey each and a copy of the same survey was delivered to 50 school staff members in the three IPS Montessori Option elementary schools. After return, the survey was processed and the final evaluation report was then presented to Dr. Adams. This is the public report of the study.

CONCLUSIONS

Survey Closed-ended Questions

Parents/Guardians responded positively to 25 of the survey's closed-ended questions. They were neutral about none and responded negatively to 4 of the survey questions. School staff responded positively to 27 of the survey's closed-ended questions. They were neutral about none and responded negatively to 2 of the survey questions.

Survey Open-ended Questions

Parents/Guardians expressed concern about more than 46 survey-related topics. Parent initiated topics included: competitiveness and comparison between and among students, curriculum design and development, learning environments, parent-teacher conferences, program expansion, public school use of Montessori philosophy, and staff certification and training. School staff expressed concern about more than 22 survey-related topics. School staff initiated topics included: classroom management, instructional materials, parent involvement, parent-teacher conferences, skills and knowledge analysis, student progress, and the IPS district-wide (ISTEP) testing program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Montessori Option evaluation report delivered to Dr. Adams contained parent/guardian and school staff responses to a variety of important Option-related issues. It was recommended that the evaluation report become a discussion document to continue worthwhile dialogue between and among Montessori Option participants.

Specific recommendations were given for discussion coordination and discussion topics delivery based on an item-by-item analysis of the survey's responses. Typical discussion topics include: what evaluation key to use on the Option report card, whether or not all information that should be on an IPS Montessori Option report card is represented on the pilot report card, and concerns about report card delivery. Discussions were also recommended based on verbatim survey comments to three open-ended questions reviewing respondent suggested strengths, weaknesses and changes in our IPS Montessori Option program.

INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MONTESSORI OPTION PUPIL PROGRESS REPORT SURVEY
MAY 1989
SURVEY RESULTS

GROUP

1. Your "position"

	Parent (A)	Guardian (E)	Total Responses
Parent/Guardian			
Frequency	168	1	169
Percent	99.4	0.6	100%

	Prin (B)	Tch (C)	IC (D)	Other (E)	Total Responses
School Staff					
Frequency	3	35	1	1	40
Percent	7.5	87.5	2.5	2.5	100%

2. Your child's or your own school participation grade levels.

	K/1 (A)	1/2 (B)	2/3 (C)	3/4 (D)	4/5 (E)
Parents	38.6	18.9	12.6	14.2	4.7
School Staff	26.3	21.1	7.9	10.5	2.6

	4/5/6 (F)	5/6 (G)	Art, PE,VM (H)	Not Applicable (I)	%	Total Responses
Parents	2.4	8.7	0.0	0.0	100%	127
School Staff	2.6	5.3	13.2	10.5	100%	38

Montessori Option Pupil Progress Report Survey Results

3. Your school

	#56 (A)	#67 (B)	#91 (C)	%	Total Responses (F)
Parents	20.8	28.6	50.6	100%	168
School Staff	21.0	34.2	44.7	100%	38

PART I. EVALUATION KEY

	SD% (A)	D% (B)	U% (C)	A% (D)	SA% (E)	Total Responses	Mean
4. The Montessori Option pilot Pupil Progress Report evaluation key should use the indicators: S (steady progress), N (needs improvement), and U (unsatisfactory).							
Parents	10.3	13.9	13.9	55.8	6.1	165	3.33
School Staff	2.6	15.8	2.6	63.2	15.8	38	3.74
5. The Montessori Option pilot Pupil Progress Report evaluation key (Reading and Math) should use the indicators: Below grade level, On grade level, Above grade level, Effort.							
Parents	4.2	10.7	11.9	53.0	20.2	168	3.74
School Staff	2.6	2.6	7.7	43.6	43.6	39	4.23
6. I understand that each Montessori Program Pupil Progress evaluation key is translated into traditional grades for a pupil's IPS Cumulative (non Montessori) Record.							
Parents	17.7	20.1	14.6	38.4	9.1	164	3.01
School Staff	5.1	0.0	10.3	51.3	33.3	40	4.08

Montessori Option Pupil Progress Report Survey Results

		SD% (A)	D% (B)	U% (C)	A% (D)	SA% (E)	Total Responses	Mean
7.	I understand how the reporting procedure (in No. 6) is accomplished.							
	Parents	27.3	36.4	15.2	19.4	1.8	165	2.32
	School Staff	7.7	15.4	2.6	43.6	30.8	39	3.74
8.	The number and type of headings and subheadings on the pilot report card are an adequate assessment to make the necessary and proper distinctions for my child's reporting procedure.							
	Parents	0.6	9.6	10.2	67.7	12.0	167	3.81
	School Staff	2.8	16.7	5.6	63.9	11.1	36	3.64
9.	Adequate space is on the pilot report card in which to record comments.							
	Parents	2.4	17.4	4.8	62.9	12.6	167	3.66
	School Staff	7.5	35.0	2.5	45.0	10.0	40	3.15
10.	All information that should be shared on an IPS Montessori Option report card is represented on the pilot report card.							
	Parents	3.6	17.6	22.4	49.7	6.7	165	3.38
	School Staff	2.8	22.2	19.4	50.0	5.6	36	3.33
11.	There should be three Montessori Option report cards: one to reflect the kindergarten level reporting needs, one for the primary grades' reporting needs and one for the intermediate grades.							
	Parents	1.2	9.0	22.3	51.8	15.7	166	3.72
	School Staff	2.5	10.0	10.0	47.5	30.0	40	3.93

Montessori Option Pupil Progress Report Survey Results

	SD% (A)	D% (B)	U% (C)	A% (D)	SA% (E)	Total Responses	Mean
12. The Montessori Option pilot Pupil Progress Report card should have a mark on the card that indicates pupil "unsatisfactory" performance.							
Parents	9.5	19.0	7.7	50.0	13.7	168	3.39
School Staff	7.7	0.0	5.1	53.8	33.3	39	4.05
13. I know where the source, or guidelines, for the present school year come from for our IPS Montessori Option philosophy.							
Parents	5.5	19.4	13.3	58.2	3.6	165	3.35
School Staff	0.0	5.4	10.8	56.8	27.0	37	4.05

PART III. IPS MONTESSORI OPTION REPORT CARD DELIVERY TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

14. The report card should be mailed to the home.							
Parents	19.2	46.7	10.8	15.0	8.4	167	2.47
School Staff	20.0	62.5	15.0	2.5	0.0	40	2.00

Question 15 should be answered by parents only.

15. I would be willing to pay the postage to have the report card mailed to my child's home.							
Parents	25.6	36.6	9.8	19.5	8.5	164	2.49
School Staff*	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2*	1.00

* (2 staff members were also parents.)

16. The report card should be picked up at school.							
Parents	19.4	31.5	12.1	26.7	10.3	165	2.77
School Staff	0.0	29.2	8.3	41.7	20.8	24	3.52

Montessori Option Pupil Progress Report Survey Results

	SD% (A)	D% (B)	U% (C)	A% (D)	SA% (E)	Total Responses	Mean
17. The child should carry the report card home.							
Parents	9.0	15.6	9.0	38.9	27.5	167	3.61
School Staff.	0.0	0.0	20.8	54.2	25.0	24	4.04
PART IV. MONTESSORI METHOD BASIC PRINCIPLES							
18. Establishing an effective relationship between the child and adult is possible only if the adult has a deep appreciation of the creative potential of the child and his or her right to become independent and free.							
Parents	2.4	5.3	7.1	49.1	36.1	169	4.11
School Staff.	0.0	8.1	10.8	48.6	32.4	37	4.05
19. The child possesses within himself or herself the person he or she will someday become.							
Parents	3.0	7.2	6.0	49.7	34.1	167	4.05
School Staff.	0.0	0.0	7.7	53.8	38.5	39	4.31
20. Very young children experience "sensitive" or critical periods in which they learn more easily than at any earlier or later period.							
Parents	0.6	2.4	10.7	48.5	37.9	169	4.21
School Staff.	0.0	2.6	7.7	30.8	59.0	39	4.46

Montessori Option Pupil Progress Report Survey Results

	SD% (A)	D% (B)	U% (C)	A% (D)	SA% (E)	Total Responses	Mean
21. The Montessori "prepared environment" should combine an atmosphere of freedom with sufficient discipline and background direction to enable the child to discover for himself or herself the keen satisfaction of independent achievement, the pleasure of work, and a sense of security flowing from order and routine.							
Parents	0.6	0.0	3.6	42.4	53.3	165	4.48
School Staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	43.6	56.4	39	4.56
22. Children can be very effectively taught through a "prepared environment."							
Parents	0.6	0.6	4.2	59.6	34.9	166	4.28
School Staff	0.0	0.0	2.6	43.6	53.8	39	4.51
23. Learning materials most helpful to the child capitalize on his or her level of readiness and those that in turn directly prepare him or her for succeeding learning tasks.							
Parents	0.0	1.2	5.4	53.9	39.5	167	4.32
School Staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	51.3	48.7	39	4.49
24. Children develop at different rates and possess different potentialities, issuing ultimately in different abilities.							
Parents	0.6	0.0	0.0	43.5	56.0	168	4.54
School Staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.8	69.2	39	4.69

Montessori Option Pupil Progress Report Survey Results

	SD% (A)	D% (B)	U% (C)	A% (D)	SA% (E)	Total Responses	Mean
25. The nature of the environment, stimulating or stultifying, is a vital factor in determining the extent to which a child's potentialities will be developed and fully realized.							
Parents	0.6	0.6	2.4	49.1	47.3	167	4.42
School Staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	51.3	48.7	39	4.49
26. Sensory-motor activities are significant means for refining perceptions and developing the elements essential for later concepts.							
Parents	0.0	0.6	3.7	57.7	38.0	163	4.33
School Staff	0.0	0.0	2.6	44.7	52.6	38	4.50
27. Individualized learning tasks involving inherently attractive self-corrective materials provide motivation for continued learning, shown in basic work habits essential to a life of learning.							
Parents	0.0	0.6	6.0	56.3	37.1	167	4.30
School Staff	0.0	0.0	2.6	53.8	43.6	39	4.41
28. The mind of the child has a great "absorptive capacity;" consequently, a rich variety of experiences will later on enable him or her to understand more readily the world about him or her.							
Parents	1.2	0.0	1.2	40.5	57.1	168	4.52
School Staff	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	39	4.67

Montessori Option Pupil Progress Report Survey Results

	SD% (A)	D% (B)	U% (C)	A% (D)	SA% (E)	Total Responses	Mean
29. The child must relate to his culture; consequently, learning materials and approaches to learning must be culturally relevant.							
Parents	3.7	8.0	12.3	47.9	28.2	163	3.89
School Staff	0.0	2.6	0.0	64.1	33.3	39	4.28
30. Discipline is an end product, not a point of departure.							
Parents	3.2	7.0	21.7	42.7	25.5	157	3.80
School Staff	0.0	2.6	21.1	39.5	36.8	38	4.11
31. The young child learns through movement and through meaningful contact with materials.							
Parents	1.2	0.0	4.2	57.5	37.1	167	4.29
School Staff	0.0	2.6	0.0	48.7	48.7	39	4.44
32. The textbook of the Montessori teacher should be the child whom he or she studies and observes scientifically. The teacher must observe the child carefully so as to detect the psychological moment in which he or she is ripe for a new learning experience. The teacher is the vital link between the child and the learning materials in the "prepared environment."							
Parents	1.2	0.6	7.3	45.7	45.1	164	4.33
School Staff	0.0	0.0	2.6	56.4	41.0	39	4.39